"BEST LAID PLANS"

By CHESTER FARRINGTON

As the carriage drew up to the curb before the station the young man whispered a few hurried words to the young woman beside him. She turned to him quickly, admiration stamped on every line of her pretty face, while one little gloved hand stole up to pull his ear caressingly.

"Splendid, oh, splendid!" she cried. "You're a genius, Tom, dear, a real genius." Then she added, with an odd little seriousness that set him chuckling, "I know I shall like you."

The young man produced a cardcase and from it pulled a Pullman ticket, which he passed to the young woman.

"I'm afraid you'll have to take one of the suit cases, dearie," he said. "Sorry, but, you see, if I come lugging them both in it will give it all away. I fancy this will be the best way out of it. If we go in together we might just as well be labeled."

The driver of the carriage descended from the box and pulled open the door.

"EF YO'LL SCUSE ME, SUH, I'LL DES SWEEP UP DAT RICE ON DE FLO'."

The man stepped out first, then assisted the young woman to alight. He handed her a suit case and a small, carefully rolled umbrella.

"Track 4, dearie," he said, giving her hand a surreptitious squeeze. He turned to the driver. "You may drive me to the other entrance," he said quietly.

The driver stood quite still, staring at the young man.

"The other entrance, I said," the latter reminded him sharply.

"Sure, sir! All right, sir!" the driver chuckled, while a broad grin wreathed his face. The young man re-entered the carriage, the driver banged the door and mounted the box, and the equipage rattled over the pavements to the other entrance of the station.

Arrived there, the young man paid the fares, gathered up the remaining suit case and a bag of golf sticks and walked leisurely across the platform to track 4. He passed over his luggage to the porter of the Pullman Avon and followed that worthy functionary down the aisle to his seat. Scarcely had the porter put down his traps when the young man turned about and discovered the young woman in the seat directly behind him. It was the same young woman of the carriage.

"Why, by Jove, Eleanor," he cried, "this is luck! I've been anticipating the usual dreary ride up to the camps, and here I run across you in possession of the very next seat to mine!"

"Cousin Tom, how very nice to meet you here!" she exclaimed, with a pleasure equaling his own.

They very solemnly shook hands. The other passengers of the car looked on, mildly interested.

"Going far?" he asked as he swung his chair about and settled himself comfortably.

"I'm bound to Ballard Junction," she said, flushing slightly.

"Good!" said he. "That's three hours away. We'll have a chance to get acquainted once more. Let's see—how long is it since I last saw you? Five years, isn't it?"

"Seven," she corrected.

"Lord, how time flies!" said he. "Come to think of it, it is seven years. It was at the mountains, wasn't it?"

She nodded. "I confess I'd scarcely have recognized you."

"You haven't changed a bit," he declared. "I'd have known you had we met at the ends of the earth."

The passengers in the neighboring seats listened to the chatter with tolerant smiles. All the world loves a romance, even a cousinly romance, and there was that in the young man's eyes which said very plainly this meeting was a consummation devoutly to be wished. The young woman, too, had a way of looking admiringly at her broad shouldered companion, and when their eyes met hers fell and her cheeks grew rather more rosy. They were two of those persons whom outsiders are prone to declare were made for each other.

Somewhere in the station a gong clanged. The train drew out of the gloom of the station into the brilliance of the early fall afternoon. The rumble of the train made it possible for the young people to speak in undertones to each other's ears alone when they chose to do so.

"Bully for you!" said the man softly. "You did it beautifully."

"I flatter myself we fooled them for once," she laughed.

Then they raised their voices and ran on about a string of cousins and aunts. They exchanged reminiscences; they talked over very thoroughly those seven (imaginary) years since they had last met. Every now and then the young man would mutter softly, "Nobody wise to it yet." And the young woman would chuckle, "Indeed not!"

The city was far behind them and they were rolling smoothly across green meadow lands when the young man noticed that the occupants of the seats directly opposite, a middle aged couple, were looking intently in his direction and smiling covertly. He tried to appear unperturbed, but somehow he felt decidedly ill at ease. The young woman's eyes followed his across the aisle, and she, too, was aware of something amiss, for her face reddened and she leaned forward nervously.

"What is it?" she asked breathlessly.

"Nothing, I imagine," said he—"our guilty consciences, perhaps," he hazarded.

She laughed a trifle artificially. "Suppose they should"— she began.

"Nonsense! They won't," said he reassuringly.

The infection was spreading. Other people in the car were beginning to take an interest in them. There were covert whisperings among the passengers and much craning of necks. A stout, good natured looking man sauntered past their seats and when he was directly opposite them dropped one eyelid in a deliberate wink, which they both saw and equally resented. Then the stout man went up the car and held quite a conversation with the grinning porter, at the close of which he nodded his head in the direction of the young people and shoved a coin into the black fist.

People were staring frankly now and grinning most absurdly. The young man glared at them savagely. He was feeling hot and uncomfortable. He turned to the young woman and raised his voice for the benefit of the listening passengers.

"I don't intend to let another seven years slip past without seeing you," he said.

At that moment the porter came ostentatiously down the car, armed with a dust pan and a small broom. He stopped before the young couple and bowed profoundly.

"Ef yo'll scuse me, suh," he said, with exaggerated politeness, "I'll des sweep up dat rice on de flo'."

It was perhaps an hour later that the young man strode into the smoking compartment. Its half dozen occupants greeted his entrance with ill concealed mirth.

"Gentlemen," said he, with quiet dignity, "hadn't we best adjourn to the buffet car? This is very evidently on me."

The Economy of Burning Small Coal.

It is a common delusion that a small fuel must necessarily be of low calorific value, and accordingly of doubtful economic value even if it can be burned. As a matter of fact, many small fuels are of excellent calorific value, and when burned with suitable appliances will show a phenomenal saving. Again and again have I seen an evaporation of ten pounds of water per pound of fuel obtained with slack from Welsh steam coal costing from 5 to 6 shillings per ton less than the large coal. Slack from a good Welsh steam coal is really remarkable value for money as compared with the large coal from which it is separated. Generally speaking, twenty tons of such slack will evaporate fully as much water as nineteen tons of the large coal, and assuming their respective costs per ton to be 15 shillings and 20 shillings the saving to the steam user will be the difference in cost between twenty tons at 15 shillings per ton and nineteen tons at 20 shillings per ton, say £4.—W. F. Goodrich in Engineering Magazine.

Making Old Potatoes New.

This is the way new potatoes are manufactured in Paris: Old potatoes, the cheapest and smallest that can be purchased, are bought by the rafistoleurs de pommes de terre, as they are called, who carry their property to the banks of the Seine, a good supply of water being necessary. The potatoes are put into tubs half filled with water; then they are vigorously stirred about by the feet and legs of the manufacturers, who roll up their trousers and stamp on the raw potatoes until they have not only completely rubbed off their dark skins, but have also given them that smooth and satin-like appearance which is so much appreciated by gormands. They are then dried, neatly wrapped in paper and arranged in small baskets, which are sold at the marchands des comestibles for 5 francs apiece. The oddest part of the whole business is that the rafistoleurs make no secret of their trade.

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